



## The Process of Distinction Through Bilinguals Attending International Schools in Korea

Chunhwa Lee

Incheon National University

### ARTICLE INFO

Received 15 June 2018

Revised 23 July 2018

Accepted 10 August 2018

Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Levels: Secondary

### KEYWORD

*distinction/international school/*

*ideology/opposition/*

*shift/addition/*

특별함/국제학교/

이데올로기/대조/

이동/추가

### ABSTRACT

Lee, Chunhwa. (2018). The process of distinction through bilinguals attending international schools in Korea. *Modern English Education*, 19(3), 11-21.

The main purpose of this study is to explore how bilingual students are going to demonstrate their distinction by attending international schools, and in order to distinguish themselves, what process they are going through. This study's theoretical framework is *Distinction, globalization, and neoliberalism*. This study analyzes interview data to demonstrate the processes of *distinction* of participants, using I. C. Jang's (2015) three terminology: *opposition, shift, and addition*. The participants' discourses illustrate that through attending international schools they pursue English communicative skills which they view as *opposition* of English test scores, and their choice of international schools instead of Korean public education systems causes some participants to *shift* their language from Korean to English. In addition, the discourses reveal that some participants expect the *additional* values of attending international schools in the aspect of not only more developed linguistic skills but also more cultural-oriented extra-activities. Finally, this study discusses the phenomena found in the data and some social problems which may be caused by the distinction process, referring to language ideologies in Korea society.

### I. INTRODUCTION

As English grows as a global language of communication, it comes to be used in many areas such as international meetings, academic fields, and new technologies. However, language practices cannot be neutral: they do not stand separated from a user's identity, history, political beliefs, and the contexts in which the language is used. People carry an ideology and want to distinguish themselves through their language practices (Campbell & Muntzel, 1989)

As such, drawn on the concept of ideologies, this study explores how bilingual students intend to make *distinc-*

*tions*<sup>1</sup> by attending international schools through their language practices. By exploring why some Korean students choose a different school system in Korea with the perspective of ideology, this study may provide understanding of the importance of English education in Korea.

According to Gal (1992), ideologies are not only ideas, constructs, notions, or representations but also practices through which those are performed. When people use language, they are at the same time revealing their beliefs about language. Thus, ideologies of language have influential power on linguistic practices (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008), and discourse practices are indexes of language ideologies. Moreover, language ideologies have

<sup>1</sup> The term *distinction* initiates from Bourdieu's (1984) book, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, in which he discusses aesthetic taste.

scholars understand how the language practices of individuals and groups are inter-related to not only an individual's but also the nation-state's economic and political interests (Gal, 1998; Kroskrity, 2000; Woolard, 1998).

In Korea, English has played a gatekeeper role for entering colleges and having jobs. Moreover, recently English accommodates Koreans to extend to a globalized stage. Therefore, English communication skills have been emphasized in Korea. However, people do not consider Korean language education systems as providing sufficient opportunities to develop various English communication skills. In a globalized world, some students choose to attend international schools in Korea. This study examines how ideologies of English function in the participants attending international schools. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) concept of *distinction*, this study focuses on what strategies they pursue to distinguish themselves through language practices by attending international schools in Korean society. If the semiotic process constructs *distinction*, then how does it actually occur? This study will investigate where the participants are heading to socially and what hierarchies they have pertaining to language ideology.

The participants' narratives, having been obtained through interviews, allow the researcher to get information about the ultimate inquiry: What kind of cultural capital do they pursue, and what process do they go through to distinguish themselves with the cultural capital?

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1. *Distinction* of Bourdieu

The term *distinction* initiates from Bourdieu's (1984) book, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, in which he discusses aesthetic taste. It is about the social structure on the basis of culture. In an individual's everyday life, he or she constantly chooses between what he or she considers beautiful and ugly among social factors, classifying which one has aesthetical value or not (Bourdieu, 1984). The individual's choice of the multitude of social factors is a matter of taste. The different aesthetic choice the individual makes is *distinction*. Bourdieu claims that taste to make choices is not subjective because the social world functions under a system of power relations and a symbolic system, in which the *distinctions* of taste are the source for social judgment. The practice of *distinction* reflects an individual's accumulated social, cultural, and educational capitals, which play a crucial role in reproducing social class. I. C. Jang (2015) discusses *distinction* with respect to English learning through the study abroad experiences of adult students. He studies the processes of *distinction*, specifying in *opposition*, *replacement*, and *addition* through an ethnographic analysis of Korean young learners studying English in a study abroad context.

*Distinction* occurs on the logic of *opposition*, which is

embedded and maintained in the social practices with such boundaries as "lower and higher" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 336) and "vulgar and noble" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 346). The oppositional relation of the values embedded in the social practice is maintained in the field of language practices (I. C. Jang, 2015). Further, when such opposition is continually imposed and strengthened in linguistic discourses, discrimination may occur in language practices with relation to linguistic ideologies. *Distinction* also happens through *shift* or *replacement* when a certain cultural capital is overproduced and largely possessed, so the value system of the capital does not hold an effectively distinctive characteristic. Then, a new form of distinctive capital is developed to put less value on the old form of capital and is assigned a privileged meaning on the new form of capital. Bourdieu calls this process "structural constant" (Bourdieu, 1984, as cited in I. C. Jang, 2015, p. 59). In addition, *distinction* can be intensified by adding a new form or meaning. The added meaning can make the holder more competitive than a person without it in the market. According to Duchêne and Heller (2012), the strategy of *distinction* as adding value is one of the key methods to making capital distinctive.

However, the problematic aspect, as Bourdieu (1984) states, is that the features of middle class taste are used as cultural signifiers in order to show their *distinction* from those who are 'below' them. People want to possess the cultural capital to have memberships in a network of relations. Cultural capital is not separated from economic capital. The more economic capital one possesses, the more cultural capital it is likely for him or her to attain. It is noticeable that cultural capital is passed down from parents to their children in the family by spending economic resources on cultural valuables and explicit items. By acquiring the language skills as cultural capital, he or she may get a more well-paying job in his or her future. Moreover, the possession of the economic and cultural capitals can provide the holder with chances of being a member of a certain group and establishing the network, which will be used for the future (Bourdieu, 1984).

Language ability as cultural capital is a central resource, in which language education can contribute to individuals' success in a certain society. "Language ability can become an essential instrument leading not only to social mobility and economic development" (Bernstein, Hellmich, Katznelson, J. Shin, & Vinall, 2015, p. 7), but also to the unity of class power and cultural capital of only the elite (Harvey, 2005). The major factor in order to be able to obtain cultural capital is a learner's socio-economic situation; while learners from middleclass families can "move in their world as a fish in water" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 163) and participate in learning language, learners from the working-class may be tasteless and unknowing (Skeggs, 2000). A cultural capital can play a crucial role in establishing social structure, which enables certain groups to obtain the culture capital.

## 2. Neoliberalism

The meaning of neoliberalism starts from Harvey's (2005) definition: "a theory of political economic practices that processes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedom and ...characterized by strong private property right, free markets and free trade" (p. 2). It has affected not only states in global contexts but also the political, social, and economic levels of local levels (Price, 2014). Recent spread of English needs to be examined in the perspective of new characteristics of the socio-economic logic of globalization called neoliberalism (Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012; Harvey, 2005). The theory of neoliberalism emphasizes the efficient market force as competition. It offers the benefits of individual choice in the free market in language and education (Price, 2014). Therefore, neoliberalism in education makes the "shift from pedagogical to market values [and] the abandonment of the social and cooperation ethnic in favour of individualist and competitive business mode" (Block et al, 2012, p. 6). In the transnational flow of economy and culture, English competence is regarded as the global language needed for gaining an advantage in globalized networks. However, as J. S. Y. Park and L. Wee (2012) argue, the neoliberal ideology can bring problems of unequal opportunities between individuals as well as states. In particular, it influences educational equality, which leads to socioeconomic mobility.

## III. BACKGROUND OF KOREAN ENGLISH LEARNING

Gumperz (1982) says that language "not only creates identity for its speakers but also identifies their social group membership" (p. 239). It means languages are socially shared and an individual's language practice cannot be separated from the value and social networks of the society that the individual belongs to.

Koreans have an ambivalent view about English. While Koreans regard English proficiency as a crucial linguistic capital for success in a Korean society and a competitive instrument in a globalized society, at the same time they have resistance toward English. In Korea, people are confronted with a norm of monolingualism, which demands that Korean people should speak only in Korean in Korea. The Korean language is identified with Korean identity. English use in daily life is considered an act of betrayal and denial of Korean identity (J. S. Y. Park, 2009).

On the other hand, Koreans recognize that as the range of globalization increases daily, more people need to speak English as a medium to a communicative tool in the globalized world, which is connected with material and symbolic ties (Blommaert, 2010). The globalized view is reflected in Korean companies' high demand for English competence of their employees (Deveau & Y. J. Bang, 2004). This view leads Korean job seekers to make efforts to prepare themselves with English fluency. Therefore, English is a key not only in a global sense but also in an individual practical aspect in Korea (J. S. Y. Park, 2009).

Within a national framework of English education, the contrast between national identity and globalization takes on a Korean-wide significance and sometimes political matters, extending to socioeconomic issues. The discourses pertaining to language and identity in Korea may be characterized by Duchêne and Heller's (2012) two intertwined terms: "pride" and "profit" (p. 3). These terms explain the co-constitutive and interwoven connections of Korean language ideologies in nationalism and globalization.

## IV. METHOD

The current study explores bilingual students' complex nature of language practices to better understand the process of symbolic boundary formation in Korean society. Utilizing a critical sociolinguistic perspective in a theoretical framework (Heller, 2008, 2011), the researcher conducted interviews with the students attending international schools<sup>2</sup> in Korea over a period of three months from June 2017 to August 2017. The data of this study include field notes from observations and five times' open-ended interviews with each of participants. Each interview was conducted for twenty minutes long, audio-recorded, and transcribed. With thematic data analysis (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013), the researcher identified topics and organized them into higher themes to address the research questions. Using both deductive and inductive analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the researcher coded and categorized the emerging themes.

### 1. Participants

The participants were tenth grade high school students attending international schools in Korea. The researcher took these students as the focal unit of the study, intending to analyze the participants' trajectories of language

<sup>2</sup> International schools are open to anyone who meets certain requirements. International schools are different from foreign schools which are specifically for international students and limit enrollment by ethnic Koreans. Even though there are several specific admission requirements for admission to international schools, the two major eligibilities are the following: 1) At least one of the candidate's parents must have citizenship in a country other than Korea or 2) the candidate must have lived overseas for more than 3 years (1,095 days). The majority of international schools have a large Korean population. The curriculum and teaching methods of international schools adopt either an American or British ones. The majority of these schools are teaching in English, though there are a few schools that follow and teach in British, German, Chinese, and Japanese curriculums. Many students of the international schools wish to attend universities abroad (Korea4 expats.com). These international schools are thought as language immersion education system in Korea because the students can learn English or other foreign languages by being exposed to natural language use to communicate. Therefore, learning the language is regarded as a by-product of learning new content material (Potowski, 2007).

practices and ideologies. The researcher first met Chris as a tutor while the researcher was teaching an SAT writing section in June 2017. He introduced me to other students attending international schools, Jaemin, Matt, Saehyun, and Youngsang, who were studying for the SAT writing section. While studying with them, the researcher asked if they would participate in my interviews over several separate occasions. The students agreed to participate in my research as subjects.

The participants in this study came from upper middle-class families. Their parents provided their tuition, whose expenses ranged from 30 to 40 million KRW. They had experiences studying abroad with their families for more than three years. As the students attending international schools were adolescents, they alone could not decide to attend the international schools: in some cases they were offered the opportunities to attend international schools by their parents. Table 1 shows the brief backgrounds of the participants' language exposure in emerging contexts.

**TABLE 1**  
Participants

Participants	Age	Country of Residence	Period (Year)	Main Language
Chris	17	U.S.A.	3	English
Jamin	18	Australia	3.5	Korean
Matt	17	U.S.A.	5	English
Saehyun	18	U.S.A.	8	Korean/English
Youngsang	17	Japan	3	Korean/English

Chris was a tenth grader when the researcher interviewed him. He stayed in the U.S. with his family from sixth grade to eighth grade during his father's sabbatical years. His main language is English. He has an English accent in his Korean. His friends said he could not speak Korean well, and they doubted he had stayed in the U.S.A. for only three years.

Jamin stayed in Australia for three and a half years from sixth grade until ninth grade while his family was considering immigrating to Australia permanently. His main language is Korean. He is the best Korean user of five participants. He has read a lot of Korean books since his childhood due to his mother's recommendation. His mother was a Korean language teacher at a high school.

Matt was born in the U.S. and moved to Korea when he was five years old. Since then, he has attended an international school in Korea. His main language is English. He is the only student who uses English at home with his father, mother, and younger sister.

Saehyun started first grade in the U.S. and came back to Korea and attended the international school in tenth grade. He is poor at reading Korean letters, but he does not have an accent when he speaks Korean. According to him, since he came back to Korea, his Korean has quickly improved. Even though he has a poor vocabulary in the Korean language, he uses both Korean and English: Korean with Korean adults and at his home, English with his

friends and at school.

Youngsang attended a kindergarten in Japan for three years. According to Youngsang, he learned Korean, Japanese, and then English. When he came back to Korea, he started first grade at the international school. Youngsang's home language is Korean only because his mother and father cannot understand English at all. Youngsang was very good at both Korean and English. His main language seems to be Korean, but he thinks he has limited Korean competence. He spends at least one hour per day enjoying Korean mass culture such as Korean pop songs and soap operas. According to him, he has recently increased his English use due to attending various extra-curricular activities at school.

## 2. Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher and the participants studied the SAT writing section sometimes all together and other times separately. The duration of each study session was one and a half hours almost every weekday from June 2017 to August 2017. After each study session, the researcher interviewed each of the students five times for about twenty minutes. The researcher also sent follow-up questions through Kakao-Talk. In the interviews although there was individual language preference, they used Korean almost all of the time because the researcher initiated the interviews in Korean. This could be because they recognized a Korean monolingual norm: using Korean with Korean people. Nonetheless, there was a lot of code-switching between Korean and English in their interviews. When they explained the content of their school subjects and sent messages with Kakao-Talk, they used only English.

In addition to the interview data, the researcher referred to some information that she got from SAT tutoring with them in natural settings. The researcher's relationship with the participants was a tutor and students, but sometimes the researcher had lunch with them, and this allowed her to establish closer relationships with them. They understood both languages (Korean and English) although there were individual differences of competence and preference between the two languages.

This study is going to explore specifically how the students try to make distinctions by attending the international schools under the ideologies of English in Korea.

The researcher intended to explore the reasons that they chose a different education system in Korea through the discourse analyses of the participants (Tarone & Swain, 1995). The researcher used a few questions to guide the interviews. The interviews provided participants' language backgrounds, participants' language attitudes, and their family backgrounds. As the intended research focuses on the reasons of their choice of educational system in the local context rather than language itself, major themes according to I. C. Jang's (2015) were categorized into three terminologies (*opposition*, *addition*, and *replacement*) through the context analysis of interview data as part of procedural analyses

The researcher asked the following open-ended questions through open-ended:

- 1) Why did the participants choose an international school?
- 2) What kind of advantages do they think they get by attending an international school?
- 3) What elements make them feel distinct by attending an international school?

## V. FINDINGS

Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of distinction and using I. C. Jang's (2015) three terminologies (*opposition*, *addition*, and *replacement*), this research reveals the processes of distinction of bilingual students who attend international schools in Korea through language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000).

According to I. C. Jang (2015), the distinction in linguistic practices occurs with three linguistic and cultural processes which are interconnected in placing a value on a certain linguistic form and use. Therefore, in this study the three semiotic terms—*opposition*, *shift*, and *addition*—may be the guideline to understand the complexity of the processes of the linguistic practices of the participants.

### 1. Opposition

According to Irvine and Gal's (2000) explanation of the process of distinction, linguistic differentiation places a high value on a certain linguistic form while eliminating another form. The opposition of the two linguistic forms could compete as dominant forms in another social and cultural domain with other ideologies (I. C. Jang, 2015). In Korean contexts, there are opposite forms to the study of English. One is emphasizing obtaining test scores, and the other is focusing on getting communicative skills.

Test scores such as Korean SAT, TOEIC, and TOEFL are significant for academic and recruitment systems in Korea because many schools and companies require applicants to submit their scores. However, although the scores still have crucial functions, recently language ideology that puts weight on oral communication competence in English has increasingly been paid attention to. As a result, oral communication skills in English are constructed as oppositional to written test skills in English (I. C. Jang, 2015). Thus, the students, especially having obtained communicative skills while staying in Anglophone-countries, want to keep their oral communication skills after coming back to Korea. Therefore, in some cases the phenomenon justifies some students' choosing international schools in Korea.

The participants do not believe that the written scores can prove ample language competence in a globalized world. The perception of the test scores is not regarded as an indicator of communicative skills but just as academic

achievement. Saehyun believes that preparations for those test-taking skills may be useless.

I hate memorizing English vocabulary for tests...I feel cool speaking English fluently. Language is pointless if you cannot speak colloquially. Learning language just for tests?...I do not have fear communicating with someone from other countries. I can make friends with people from all over the world easily because of my competence in English. (Saehyun)

Saehyun puts less value on the traditional ways of learning English in Korea, associating it with "test-taking skills" in English. He considers English communicative competence provides him with a tool to be socialized, and he has confidence communicating with people speaking other languages.

The ideology that participants have, related to English education, is that the traditional English learning in Korea is done only in "the classroom," associating it with just an "academic" subject, different from their using English in their daily lives. Due to attending an international school, Youngsang thinks that he can keep developing communicative skills in natural settings, which he could not obtain if he attended a traditional Korean school.

My English is different ...my friend(attending Korean school)studies and uses English just in class, as a subject. he is a very good student, ...he may be in the top 5% in his school, and gets perfect scores in English...but he said he could not communicate in English any more with an American after he said 'hi, nice to meet you' (Youngsang)

Youngsang explains his distinction of English communicative skills by citing his friend's lack of English communicative skills. He was proud of his English communicative skills. Youngsang's narratives show the situation where high test scores do not demonstrate the distinctive value in the actual language use in real life. Even though his friend gained high scores in English at his school, he did not have flexible ability to cope with actual communication in English when he met an English-speaking person. It also reflects the ideology: high TOEIC scores do not secure communication skills of English (I. C. Jang, 2015; J. S. Y. Park, 2009).

If I went to a Korean school, I also have to study English in Hakwon to get additional communication skills... then, my English competence was limited to say 'how are you...what are you doing...?' (Matt)

Matt thinks a Korean school cannot provide the opportunities to develop communicative skill, and in order to get communicative skills in English, he should go to a private institution (Hakwon). However, he says Hakwon will not satisfy him because Korean private institutions teach students to develop just simple oral communication skills, believing that private institution courses do not provide various and intensive communicative learning opportuni-

ties.

The participants definitely recognize speaking English cannot be obtained in a traditional academic setting but acquired in a natural one along with practical use in their daily lives.

The following narratives show how much they put importance on communicative skills. They say good test scores cannot make someone a good communicator of English in Korean school contexts, but to be a good student in their schools (international schools), good English communicative skills should accompany their current studies.

Dongwon has recently moved from a Korean school to here (an international school). Yes,... he is good at math, but I do not know how he follows up on our curriculum after just staying in America for three years. I wonder if he can follow the material that teachers provide. (Jaemin)

Jaemin associates academic achievement at his school with English competence. In an international school context, he thinks English competence is a foundation, especially to be able to understand a teacher's directions.

Today I am so angry because I got B+ on my essay in social studies, but Derek got 97%. I cannot understand how he got that score. If you hear how he speaks English, you would not think he could write an excellent essay. (Saehyun)

Saehyun also argues that a poor communicator in English cannot highly achieve in his school. According to his argument, without good communication skills, students cannot extend their academic achievement forward in his school setting. For them English is a medium to study various subjects.

The participants put the international school contexts opposite of traditional Korean schools in the aspect of not only being able to develop communicative English skills but also to get an ideal studying circumstance.

One obvious distinction of attending an international school instead of a Korean school is that international school students are less stressed by competitions and rigors of tests. Students are thought to approach the materials in numerous methods, not just confined by a series of paper exams. As a result, test result rankings are not the most important standard of success, unlike in Korean public schools, where they evaluate students solely based on their test rankings. (Youngsang)

Youngsang says he is reluctant to the Korean schools' result-based tests because they focus on students' test scores, not the process-based evaluations. However, in the following narratives of Matt, there is an established social boundary between international schools and Korean schools as an opposite.

Matt: ...International students are also more culturally accepting...more open... Kinda?

Researcher: In what aspect do you think international school students are more open?

Matt: One thing I say... opened up more ... the international school community is diverse. We have different races and cultural backgrounds....exposing us to more racial and cultural diversity... makes us more... accepting of people rather than an outlier.

Researcher: Are there many students from other countries or ethnicities?

Matt: ...I mean the teachers...

Matt's argument includes that speaking English contexts can provide diversity from other races and cultures, leading to openness. He emphasizes that the students at his school can access diverse races and cultures, but the diversity does not come from interaction just between the students but also from the teachers.

People (attending international schools) are wealthy, I feel comfortable with the same students here...and I think international schools are better connected to other international schools through events and tournaments (of sports). (Matt)

According to Matt, the students of the international schools are upper class with respect to their economic level, and he feels comfortable among the students because they come from similar economic circumstances. In addition, the international schools have closer intra-social networks among them than the Korean ones do.

The narratives of participants show that they do not recognize an international school as one of various educational systems in Korea but the opposite of the Korean educational system in various aspects.

## 2. Language Shift

Some participants of this study distinguished themselves by changing their main language from Korean to English within a Korean society. While bilingualism or multilingualism can create doubts about the speaker's loyalty to his or her nation, recently bilingualism or multilingualism itself has become an iconic sign in Korean society. The new frame promotes the flexible language ideologies of *cosmopolitan* and *globalization*. However, bilingualism is not maintained equally between the two languages. In the aspect that language *shift* is always preceded by bilingualism or multilingualism, some bilinguals in this study go through the pre-process of language *shift*. In this study some participants maintain two languages, Korean and English, but other participants are losing the Korean language and are shifting their main language to English.

The following narratives of the participants show what process they are going through in language practices, and finally what language they choose to distinguish themselves. Chris shows how the complicated elements of language *shift* work in Korean society.

Researcher: Why did you decide to attend an international school in Korea?

Chris: As you know, when I speak English in a public place, people stare at me...Once, I was wearing a hoodie with the U.S.A. flag on the front. One of the old men next to me in the waiting room of a hospital scolded me for wearing the hoodie as a Korean. Koreans are hostile towards American culture and people who speak English outside of school, but I wanted to maintain my English skill that I obtained from my studies in the U.S.

Chris says about his experience he encountered the criticism of American culture in his everyday life in Korean society. Although English has been pervasive in Korean society, English is not used in Koreans' daily communications (J. Song, 2007). The Korean language is identified with Korean identity. English use in daily life is regarded as an act of betrayal and denial of Korean identity. Chris recognizes the ideology of English related to national identity in Korean society. In this context, Chris is concerned if he does not use English in his daily life, he will not maintain his English competence that he obtained while staying in the U.S. In order to maintain his English competence, he chose an international school, in which he can use and develop English without concern for being reprimanded.

Researcher: Which is your main language between Korean and English?

Chris: I feel comfortable speaking English. I stayed in the U.S. from sixth grade until eighth grade. It was my adolescent period. I could develop my language (English) fast because in my school (in the U.S.), Koreans were rare. During the three years I forgot most of the Korean language. In addition, here, I use only English, and I just have friends attending international schools.

According to Chris, he was staying in the U.S. during his critical period to develop his language, and he chose to enter the international school when coming back to Korea. He spends the majority of his time in English-oriented places such as international school, extracurricular activities with friends from international schools, and afterschool studying spoken English. He also hangs around with English speaking friends. Therefore, his main language has become English. His language shifts seem a natural phenomenon in his circumstances although he is staying in Korea.

When Chris came back to Korea from the U.S., he had lost almost of his Korean language skills. However, he did not have any intention of recovering his Korean language skills even though he was staying in Korea. On the contrary, by choosing an international school, he wants to seek a safe place to speak English comfortably without being reprimanded by other Koreans. Because of the fear of being criticized for using English, he isolates himself from the Korean spoken society, which accelerates his language shift from Korean to English.

Researcher: Which language (between Korean and English) is more important for you?

Chris: It is hard to answer. Your question is like...do you like mom or daddy? Still I am a Korean... but I do not think it is important whether to speak Korean or not. I am myself. I feel comfortable using English. And I can have a job anywhere in the future. I do not want to limit my future to Korea. To speak honestly, in this globalized world, speaking English is very significant for my future rather than speaking Korean.

Chris puts his individualism before national identity. In addition, he justifies his English choice as his main language; his reasoning is that he will live as a cosmopolitan member of society in his future job and his future place of residence.

Youngsang chose to enter an international school instead of a Korean public school when coming back to Korea from Japan. Youngsang is also going through language shift from Korean to English.

I have spent the majority of my early childhood abroad, and deficiency in my Korean speaking skills made me reluctant to attend a Korean public school...and I wanted an easy short-cut to student success and a prestigious education in an international world...you know speaking English is important these days... (Youngsang)

According to Youngsang, his decision to attend an international school comes from his staying abroad and his poor Korean skills. However, the country where he stayed was Japan, which is non-English speaking. In addition, he was not attending an international school in Japan. Even though he says his Korean skills were poor when he came back to Korea, he also could not speak English well at that time. Between those poor languages (Korean and English), he chose to develop English at an international school because of the toughness of the Korean school system. Moreover, his mentioning of "success and prestigious education" implies that education in English and getting fluent in English is prestigious and could contribute to success in his life. Like Chris, he also thinks he can distinguish himself with English skills rather than Korean ones.

Both Chris and Youngsang have chosen English as their main language by deciding to attend international schools instead of Korean schools. In the context of an international school, English is used as the medium of education across all subjects. Consequently, their chances to develop English increase, but on the other hand, the opportunities to develop Korean are limited because of the lack of input.

Both participants' language shifts reflect their language ideologies: English education is prestigious and provides chances to be successful in the future, so they can distinguish themselves by developing English competency.

### 3. Addition

In various sociolinguistic fields, bilingualism is regarded as a competitive competence in international and global settings. They want to distinguish themselves by adding another language (English). However, when they choose

international schools, the participants assume the benefits of taking knowledge related to the language (English). The participants desire to add not only English skills but also the knowledge of culture in which English is spoken to their Korean skills. The curricula of their international schools do not emphasize only developing English skills; students appreciate the additional knowledge provided by their international schools.

Saehyun's main purpose for entering an international school was the language issue. He wants to add English skills to his Korean competence. He thinks that being bilingual itself can be enough of a distinctive element.

I am so proud of myself because I am attending an international school...cause I am a bilingual; I use Korean out of school...at home and speak English at school. I take pride in being a bilingual. I want to be a perfect bilingual like Ms. Kang. You know the Korean minister of foreign affairs. (Saehyun)

Saehyun explains his language circumstances. As he uses Korean out of school, he can maintain his Korean competence, and at the same time, he can develop his English skills because his school is supposed to use only English. Therefore, he can distinguish himself as a bilingual.

In an international school I can also study math, social sciences, music, but here...all learning is in English, so I obtain knowledge and simultaneously I can develop my English, too. Especially, I can improve my English, not only on a daily level, but in various fields like a native speaker by not only studying the subjects but also by being involved in various extracurricular activities in English. (Saehyun)

Saehyun states that simply adding English language skills to his Korean skills can be a distinctive feature. In addition, he says in his school contexts he is not only learning subjects that traditional high school students should study but also improving his English skills up to the fluency of a native speaker. In addition, his English skill can extend to various fields, going beyond the daily speaking level due to the curricula of international schools and diverse after school programs.

Youngsang also argues that he can gain some additional advantages by attending an international school besides obtaining English competence.

As an international student, I have access to numerous opportunities in approaching my major and applying them directly by taking AP classes even before I enter a college... accordingly through such autonomous learning style and availability of extracurricular activities my English improved a lot even though I have never lived in America... for me... AMIS orchestra...it is a very advanced level... and the AISA swimming league ...have helped me discover my passions and provided lessons to nurture them as well. (Youngsang)

Researcher: What are AMIS and AISA?

Youngsang: AMIS is the Association for Music in Interna-

tional Schools, and AISA is the Association of International Schools.

Researcher: Is the Association limited to Korean international schools?

Youngsang: No, No. sometimes international schools in Asia, but the music brings in students from all over the world....so it is fun.

Youngsang also says he can get college level knowledge in the field that he wants to major in by taking AP (Advanced Placement) courses in advance at his school besides improving his English skills up to a professional level. He is also enjoying international school activities like music and sports as an extension of the school program. The activity group Youngsang mentions is cooperation among its member schools to enhance the development of socialization of the international school students. However, the socialization through activities is made with international students from other countries rather than the students in Korean public schools.

Jaemin says he can learn to understand culture and situations in which English is spoken as well as develop his English in his school system.

I can keep and develop my English skills at the international school. Moreover, I can learn how to speak English. Speaking English itself may not matter... I got first place at the last Yale debate...if I did not learn how to make an argument at the international stage... Because I have been educated in an American school, I understand how to compete with students from all over the world...so I got a good result. (Jaemin)

Jaemin says because he learned the way to make an argument at his school, he could get a good result in debate competition. He states the cultural advantages of his schools besides developing his English. In his school he is learning the knowledge of how to communicate and understand Western culture, which adds to the opportunities to develop English skills. He emphasizes that he is learning the situations in which the discourses of English are made by attending an international school.

Saehyun, Jamin and Youngsang chose the international school because they think they are adding various benefits of the school: they are obtaining not only English language skills but also diverse knowledge in various subjects as well as experience through extracurricular activities the Korean school cannot provide. Students appreciate the additional cultural resources, which can make them distinctive.

## VI. DISCUSSION

This paper categorized the process of distinction of the participants attending international schools by using the concepts of I. C. Jang's (2015) terminology—*opposition*, *shift*, and *addition*—with the Bourdieusian sense. This observation stems from different school systems in which



symbolic boundaries have been drawn: international schools and traditional schools in Korea. The participants examined in this study recognize English competence as a major advantage in a globalized world. As Bourdieu (1984) says, linguistic abilities are regarded as high culture and qualification to be a global citizen. The students appreciate the natural circumstances in which they can develop their English skills to a higher level. They think their international school contexts can provide a distinct advantage in acquiring English to them.

This study has revealed that the process of distinction is complicatedly entangled and related to the language issue. Changed trends of English which are influenced by the ideology of the *globalized world* cause English learners in Korea to seek communicative language competency to distinguish themselves. Under the ideology of globalization people have come to believe in the need of English as a global language (Piller, 2015). However, over-emphasizing test scores in Korean traditional schools has led the participants who had experiences of studying abroad to seek alternative ways to speak English in their real lives and maintain their oral proficiency as a distinctive language competence. The students regard international schools as providing the circumstances to develop communicative skills, opposite of Korean traditional schools that focus on English test scores. By choosing an international school, the students established a frame of opposition between English learning for tests and English use for practical purposes in the globalized world.

While the students consider their international school's circumstances as the opposition of the traditional Korean school, their discourses create, through the process of opposition, social distinctions such as economic status and social class. They make their own boundary through school networks.

The ideology of the *globalized world* has led the participants to consider that communicative English skills can make them distinctive not only in the present but also in their future lives in a global setting. However, within the Korean monolingual ideology, their English use can be considered a betrayal of national identity in Korean society. As Makihara and Schieffelin (2007) state, the participants who have contacted new culture negotiate the ideology of Korean monolingualism and put their future job security and identity as a member in the globalized world before their ethnic and national identity. The potential superiority of English, as a cultural capital, cannot be blurred by the basic long-term ideology of Korean monolingualism. Therefore, the participants who had experiences of staying abroad choose an international school, in which they can speak English without being reprimanded. However, in the process that they make themselves distinguished by attending international schools, some participants show language shift from Korean to English. Although the language *shift* occurs within a certain class, it is a reflection of social ideology. Their language *shift* might be influenced by hegemony of English in the Korean middle class. Their language *shift* leads them to social-

ize with the people speaking English in a Korean society, and English fluent groups construct their own circle with language and want to make distinctive categories. The boundary between fluent English speakers and non-fluent speakers within Korean society cannot be an ideal social phenomenon.

The participants' attempt to make a distinction via English skills by attending an international school is also reflected in the intention of *addition*. They want to distinguish themselves by adding professional knowledge and the English skills of a native speaker's level to their Korean language skills while studying various subjects and doing extracurricular activities in English, which traditional Korean schools do not provide. Moreover, they put a high value on their international school circumstances in the aspect that it can provide them with *additional* knowledge to understand Western culture and activities that lead to obtaining high English proficiency in professional and international fields. The package of English skills and other knowledge to communicate in the international world is an attractive opportunity and a good reason to attend international schools. However, their English skills and knowledge obtained in the process of acquiring it can be a linguistic instrument (Kubota, 2011), which leads to economic development and finally ends up creating a linguistic hierarchy and privileging elites (Sonntag, 2003).

Duchêne and Heller (2012) state that language and culture are associated more with economic advantages (profit) and less with rights and heritage (pride). As Bourdieu (1984) mentions, the advantages of middle class economic capital of this study lead to benefits of obtaining English skills (cultural capital); as a result, the participants can make their own social capital by socializing with members who have English fluency (cultural capital). This accelerates the participants' opportunities to access cultural capital and enables them to be more open to English as shown in this study. The phenomenon means that people who have sufficient economic capital can obtain cultural capital, which leads to establishing social and economic boundary.

On the other hand, it is true that for a number of students attending Korean traditional schools, the opportunities to learn English up to a fluent level in Korean society are constrained due to a monolingual Korean background and educational system. It can be an issue of equity of opportunity. The unequal resource allocation in education acts as a gatekeeper to social mobility.

In sum, the analysis of sociolinguistic phenomena is to investigate the complex processes, to find anxiety in existing linguistic or non-linguistic elements, and to make questions about the consequences of the sociolinguistic practices. English globalization has become a natural issue in the new millennium, and moreover, language *shift* which is "the structural underpinnings of culture" (Kane, 2003, p. 403) may be a natural phenomenon in the globalization process. However, this paper found the process of distinction can bring about the social boundary between holder and non-holder of economic capital, which leads to

possession of cultural capital and social capital. English competence can construct a social boundary which transcends the particular language; English can be regarded as high culture as pursued by the upper class. Therefore, it is time to consider the gatekeeping role of English and unequal opportunities, especially in the education field.

## VII. CONCLUSION

It is impossible to generalize this study's argument to a large number of cases because the sample of this study is small and limited to the students from middle class families. Nevertheless, the importance of this study may give opportunities to consider the unequal resource of cultural capital. This paper studied the trajectories of language practices of Korean bilingual students attending international schools. The ideologies of language in Korea show that English competency can be a distinction for students. As discussed in this paper, due to the complex language ideologies in Korea, however, the demand of language learners and the supply of language programs do not meet each other, so some students who have achieved highly proficient language skills or want to get high communicative skills choose an alternative school system, such as international schools, and establish their own social group.

The phenomenon of *globalization* might have a huge impact on bilingualism or multilingualism. In a globalized world, it cannot be denied that English proficiency is a key, and English is regarded as a usual world supra-language. It is true that people should not be enclosed within the ideology that English is the destroyer of a heritage language. House (2003) says the language to communicate and language to identify oneself can be different. She says English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) makes people from various language backgrounds communicate in the globalized world. Therefore, English as the medium of international communication should not empower just a particular group of speakers in a local setting.

If education has the intention of providing students with a program to communicate in a globalized world, it must actively facilitate various programs from a basic level to a high level to satisfy the demand of English learners in public schools. Regarding English education, the public education system inconsiderately assumes that every learner possesses economic capital to acquire language ability. In actuality, only a few learners possess economic capital to develop language ability as much as they want. This study suggests that achieving a global language of communication should be obtained up to the appropriate levels that learners expect. Moreover, each person must have the freedom to choose his or her own linguistic level regardless the economic status. In future research, the problem of the social boundary caused by an unequal supply of language education in Korean society should be explored more thoroughly.

## REFERENCES

- Bernstein, K. A., Hellmich, E. A., Katznelson, N., Shin, Jaran, & Vinall, K. (2015). Introduction to special issue: Critical perspectives on neoliberalism in second/foreign language education. *L2 Journal*, 7(3), 3-14.
- Block, D., Gray, J., & Holborow, M. (2012). *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*, New York: Routledge.
- Blommaert, J. (2010). *The Sociolinguistics of globalization*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.) Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Campbell, L., & Muntzel, M. (1989). The structural consequences of language death. In N. C. Dorian (Ed.), *Investigating obsolescence* (pp. 181-196). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deveau, D., & Bang, Young-Joo. (2004). Developing an immersion program in the Korean EFL context. *Modern English Education*, 5(1), 206-235.
- Duchêne, A., & Heller, M. (2012). *Language in late capitalism: Pride and profit*. New York: Routledge.
- Gal, S. (1992). Multiplicity and contention among ideologies: A commentary. *Pragmatics*, 2(3), 445-449.
- Gal, S. (1998). Multiplicity and contention among language ideologies. In B. Schieffelin, K. Woolard, & P. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 317-331). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gumperz, J. (1982). *Language and social identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heller, M. (2008). Doing ethnography. In L. Wei & M. Moyer (Eds.), *The Blackwell guide to research methods in bilingualism and multilingualism* (pp. 249-262). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Heller, M. (2011). *Paths to post-nationalism: A critical ethnography of language and identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- House, J. (2003). English as a lingua franca: A threat to multilingualism? *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(4), 556-578.
- Irvine, J. T., & Gal, S. (2000). Language ideology and linguistic differentiation. In P. V. Kroskrity (Ed.), *Regimes of language: Ideologies, politics, and identities* (pp. 35-84). Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press.
- Jang, In Chull. (2015). Learning as a struggle for distinction in today's corporate recruitment culture: An ethnographic study of English study abroad practices among South Korean undergraduates. *L2 Journal*, 7(3), 57-77.
- Kane, D. (2003). Distinction worldwide?: Bourdieu's the-

- ory of taste in international context. *Poetics*, 31(5-6), 403-421.
- King, K. A., Fogle, L., & Logan-Terry, A. (2008). Family language policy. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 2(5), 1-16.
- Kubota, R. (2011). Questioning linguistic instrumentalism: English, neoliberalism, and language test in Japan. *Linguistics and Education*, 22(3), 248-260.
- Kroskrity, P. (2000). Regimenting languages: Language ideological perspectives. In P. Kroskrity (Ed.), *Regimes of language: Ideologies, politics, and identities* (pp. 1-34). Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press.
- Makihara, M., & Schieffelin, B. (2007). *Consequence of contact: Language ideologies and sociocultural transformations in Pacific societies*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Park, Joseph Sung Yul. (2009). *The local construction of a global language: Ideology of English in South Korea*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Park, Joseph Sung Yul, & Wee, L. (2012). *Markets of English: Linguistic capital and language policy in a globalizing world*. New York: Routledge.
- Piller, I. (2015). Language ideologies. In K. Tracey, C. Ilie, & T. Sandel (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of language and social interaction* (pp. 1-10). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell-ICA.
- Potowski, K. (2007). *Language and identity in a dual immersion school*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Price, G. (2014). English for all? Neoliberalism, globalization, and language policy in Taiwan. *Language in Society*, 43(5), 567-589.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). (2013). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Skeggs, B. (2000). Rethinking class: Class cultures and explanatory power. In M. Haralambos (Ed.), *Developments in sociology: An annual review* (pp. 1-25). Ormskirk, Lancashire: Causeway Press.
- Song, Juyong. (2007). *Language ideologies and identity: Korean children's language socialization in a bilingual Setting* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The Ohio State University, Columbus.
- Sonntag, S. K. (2003). *The local politics of global English: Case studies in linguistics globalization*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Tarone, E., & Swain, M. (1995). A sociolinguistic perspective on second language use in immersion classrooms. *Modern Language Journal*, 79(2), 166-178.
- Woolard, K. A. (1998). Introduction: Language ideology as a field of inquiry. In B. Schieffelin, K. Woolard, & P. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 3-47). Oxford: Oxford University Press.